Steps to increase sea-lift capabilities of the Navy

1541. SHRI RAMA MUNI REDDY SIRIGIREDDY:
SHRIK. RAMA MOHANA RAO:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) the steps Navy is taking to increase sea-lift capabilities after the recent Tsunami;

(b) whether the Navy felt, at any time, to acquire landing platform docks or large amphibious vessels to ensure that relief material is reached to the disaster-affected areas quickly; and

(c) if so, steps taken by the Navy to acquire such vessels?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (c) Indian Navy are exploring to possibility of acquisition of an old landing platform dock from USA to upgrade its sea-lift capabilities, taking into account various aspects like its price, residual life, utility etc.

Arms Deals with US and Russia

1542. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO:
DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether India had arms deals with US and Russia;

(b) if so, whether delegations from US and Russia visited India in the month of September-October, 2005 and had discussions to set up units to solve repairs issues for weapon systems for Russia;

(c) if so, whether US high power delegation visited India and had assured to come back again with clarifications sought by the end users;

(d) if so, what is the outcome of the talk held and to what extent clarifications have been sought; and

(e) what are the agreements reached with the US delegations?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) A Russian delegation visited India in September, 2005. The delegation made a presentation on Indo-Russian Company Rosoboron service to the Indian side.

(c) to (e) A US delegation visited India in September, 2005 and held discussions on the Indian Navy's proposal for acquisition of defence equipment and platforms. No agreement was concluded with the US delegation.

Sale of 30 ALH to Chile

1543. SHRI RAMA MUNI REDDY SIRIGIREDDY: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state.

(a) whether it is a fact that India is selling its indigenous built 30 Advance Light Helicopters (Dhruv) to Chile;

(b) if so, whether it is also a fact that it is the first and the single largest sale by the Indian Defence Establishment; and

(c) who were the other contenders for this deal?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI B.K. HANDIQUE): (a) to (c) The Dhruv Helicopter manufactured by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited has been trial evaluated, along with certain other helicopters of major manufacturers, by the Chilean authorities. However, no purchases have been made.

Special Cell for securing release of POWs

1544. SHRIMATI JAYA BACHCHAN: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that family members of 54 soldiers believed to be in Pakistan jails since the 1965 and 1971 wars have demanded that Government set up a special cell to work on bringing them back; and

(b) the action Government have taken in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b) The Government have been taking up the matter of the release of Indian Prisoners of Wars with Pakistan through diplomatic channels and during